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ABSTRACT

This paper describes a career information center established in a secondary school as a demonstration guidance project. The center is managed by a full-time careers consultant and has been operational since 1974. The demonstration project is designed as a method of delivering career information and related services to students. Goals include increasing awareness of career possibilities; acting as a resource center for career information; bridging community and school resources; aiding in career or job preparation; providing a facility for field testing innovations in career education. Some attempts to evaluate the center's effectiveness are currently underway (1976), and the hope is that the program will be modified to serve as a model for other schools. (NG)

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THE BOARD OF EDUCATION FOR THE BOROUGH OF NORTH YORK

THE CAREER INFORMATION CENTRE

A DEMONSTRATION GUIDANCE PROJECT

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A DEMONSTRATION GUIDANCE PROJECT

THE CAREER INFORMATION CENTRE

GEORGES VANIER SECONDARY SCHOOL

A demonstration Career Information Centre, jointly sponsored by the Board of Education for The Borough of North York and the Department of Manpower and Immigration, has been established at Georges Vanier Secondary School. The Centre is managed by a full-time Careers Consultant under the supervision of the Head of Guidance and responsible to the Principal of the school. The development phase of the project began in March 1974 and continued through July 1974. From September 1974 until June 1976, the program will be in the evaluation phase and in full operation.

BACKGROUND

Considerable research has been and is being done on the problems of youth unemployment. At the present time, the unemployment rate of these young people (under age 20) is more than double the overall rate. In addition, many young people have encountered serious problems in seeking employment after completing a program of post-secondary education.

Preliminary findings to date suggest that alleviation of these problems is increasingly an in-school matter; that is, many young people have difficulty in making the transition from school to entry employment because limited attention has been given to providing them with information and insight to understand the working world and to make effective vocational decisions.

Lack of goals coupled with low self-esteem often leads to dropping out of school with the young person being ill-prepared to select or secure employment. While in school, all young people need additional opportunities to examine suitable alternatives both in employment possibilities and in appropriate further education. Thus, there is a need for a developmental approach in using career information in a gradual preparation for employment.

The present pattern of the credit system in secondary schools limits the opportunities for presenting information to student groups. Schools are finding it increasingly difficult, under budget restrictions and less favourable counsellor-student ratios, to provide students with sufficient up-to-date information and related services.

While the school has a responsibility for helping students in their search for educational and career goals, preparation for entry to the working world is a responsibility which ought to be shared by the broad community. Indeed, budgetary restrictions on educational expenditures make it imperative that exploration be made of avenues whereby effective cooperation with resources outside of the educational system can be developed.

In helping youth prepare for eventual employment, an obvious gap exists between those services which the educational system is providing and those services offered by government agencies and other community resources. The operation of the Centre is one attempt to bridge this gap.

PURPOSE

The demonstration project is designed as a method for delivery of career information and related services to students and incorporates the following goals:

1. To stimulate the desire of students for increased knowledge of their personal interests and career aspirations.
2. To increase individual awareness of career opportunities.
3. To broaden opportunities for seeking pertinent career information.
4. To increase the chances for selecting realistic career goals.
5. To act as an immediate resource in a school program of "career education" as a developmental process.
6. To bring the "World of Work" in closer perspective.
7. To develop a knowledge of community resources which aid in the search for career goals.
8. To aid in preparation for employment.
9. To increase awareness of the relationships among education, type of eventual employment, and the individual's life style.
10. To demonstrate an effective way to deliver career information to in-school youth using the principle of student initiative and self- help.
11. To provide a vehicle whereby new and innovative approaches to career counselling can be "field tested".

PROGRAM

An Advisory Committee has been established to help develop the program and to act as an advisory body for the project. Facets of the program include items such as:

- nature and extent of materials used
- procedures for developing student use of the Centre
- involvement and relationship with school counsellors
- liaison with teachers to encourage giving of assignments requiring use of the Centre
- liaison with school librarians
- involvement of resources in local Canada Manpower Centres
- utilization of volunteer workers from the community
- involvement of resource personnel from the broad community
- involvement of peer group volunteers
- resultant visitations to on-the-job situations
- relationship to Work Study operations
- contribution of the Student Guidance Information Service, Ministry of Education
- use of Centre by students from other schools within the Vanier family.

Students are encouraged to use the Centre for seeking information and exploring other resources and experiences related to identifying career goals. The Centre is available to students during school hours and possibly after hours to people in the community.

EVALUATION

Procedures have been established for evaluating the project and, as determined, modifying the operation. The Educational Research Services Department of the Board of Education with assistance from Manpower personnel has developed a research design for this purpose. A survey of a random sample of 3,800 secondary students across Metro on "Needs and Priorities Related to Career Information" has provided useful data for modifying goals.

The project embodies a joint effort for developing an innovative program which will not only be of benefit to students but will also demonstrate new methods of service both for the Board and for Manpower. The project is being developed as a model for programs of this nature. Evaluation will help to determine ways in which the model can be adapted to other schools, other school systems, and to other communities in Canada.

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